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large, but the enlargement begins during germination, before the ants attack it, an instance of a plant preparing beforehand for expected guests. It is said that seedling plants which fail to become inhabited perish. Dr. Gray, in a review, says that "it is most supposable that this extraordinary formation was acquired gradually; that the normally fleshy caulicle of the ancestral plant, made a nidus by an insect, developed under the disturbing stimulus somewhat as a gall develops, until at length the tendency became hereditary and the singular adaptation of plant to insect was established."

THE SUDDEN DEATH of Hon. George W. Clinton, of Albany, N. Y., was announced in the papers of September 7. He was seventy-eight years old, a son of DeWitt Clinton, and his name is a very familiar one to botanists, especially those of an earlier day. A part of the promised pleasure of the Botanical Club at Buffalo next year was the presence of this venerable and most entertaining botanist, who knew the plant haunts of that locality better than almost any one, and whose company was always delightful. The lateness of the news prevents any fuller and more worthy notice in this issue. The following from the *New York Tribune* gives some of the details of his death:

ALBANY, September 7.—The body of George W. Clinton, vice-chancellor of the Board of Regents, was found in the Rural Cemetery this afternoon, about a quarter of a mile from the lodge. Of late he had manifested a great interest in the study of botany, and when here before it was his custom to follow his favorite study in the cemetery. Last spring he was a frequent visitor. This afternoon at two o'clock he went up for the same purpose, apparently in his usual health. Reaching the lodge, he rested a while and then started up the avenue, in which direction he was found two hours later. Death had apparently been painless and is attributed to heart disease.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

Talks Afield about Plants and the Science of Plants. By L. H. Bailey, Jr. pp. ix, 173. 12mo. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

It is a most praiseworthy desire to present the truths of science correctly to the great mass of people who have neither time nor talent to study for themselves. The press-to-day in its "scientific columns" has done much to disseminate nonsense, and no science has suffered in this respect more than botany. Hence we are always ready to welcome such a book as the one before us—cheap, attractively written, well adapted to its expected readers, and, better than all, truthful so far as it goes. A professional botanist may discover grave omissions in his special department, but such he ought to find in such a book. We bespeak for Mr. Bailey a large circle of readers, and this attempt to make science attractive to all can not be too highly commended. No criticism is needed regarding the many interesting things omitted, but rather the wonder is how many important things have been compressed into these few pages, and an attractive style preserved, a style that is of necessity somewhat diffuse. The topics presented are such as follow: the flower, the stem, the rose family, the composite family, a peep at the inside, cross-fertilization, hidden flowers, the compass-plant, how some plants get up in the world, carnivorous plants, witch-hazel, a thistle-head, etc.

The Grasses of Maine. Designed for the use of the students of the Maine State College, and the farmers of the state. By C. H. Fernald, A. M. Augusta, 1885. 8mo. pp. 70. 42 plates.

This work, which is privately published and only intended for local use, is a creditable production. One is at once struck with the attractive form in which it is issued, the printer's part being done in a very satisfactory manner. Looking deeper, the author's part is found equally good, and it is only disappointing in its brevity. The value of the grass family as a source of sustenance and revenue is first discussed, successively followed by a description of the general structure of the grass plant, definitions of the terms used in describing grasses, the physical and chemical constitution of grasses, a key to the genera, fifty pages of descriptions and notes on the species, and a suitable index. This occupies about half the volume, the remainder being filled with forty-two full page plates of grasses from Vasey's "Grasses of the United States."

The systematic part gives botanical descriptions in simple language, and notes on the agricultural value of the species. The Latin names are divided into syllables and the accent marked. Authorities following the Latin name are written out in full. Keys to the species of the larger genera and references to the plates assist the novice, who attempts determining the name of a grass, as much as it is possible to do in the absence of a teacher.

Although primarily intended for students, it must be of great service to intelligent farmers throughout the state. The paucity of information, however, regarding the agricultural value of grasses is astonishing. It is almost all derived from Flint, Gould and Vasey. If one examines the works of these writers it is found that they quote from each other, and very largely from Sinclair's standard work "*Hortus Gramineus Woburnensis*," pretty largely without giving credit. A thorough work on agricultural grasses based on original observations and recent experiments is much needed.

Although Professor Fernald's work contains nothing new, it seems admirably fitted for the practical objects in view, and worthy of special commendation.

Descriptive Botany. A practical guide to the classification of plants, with a popular flora. By Eliza A. Youmans. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 12°, pp. xxvi, 336.

We have before us another attempt to prepare a work on botany suitable for High Schools and Academies. Our judgment as to what is needed by such schools does not at all coincide with that of the author. The study of descriptive botany, while valuable in its place, when pursued *alone* and *as an end* tends to superficiality and gives the student a mere "bowing acquaintance" with plants. The author adheres strictly to the title of her book, and we have in it not a word in regard to the internal structure or functions of plants. Another volume of the series "by an eminent authority" is promised, to treat of physiology. This divorce however will be fatal to the common school work; it will be very rare that any school will give the time necessary to a study of both books.

The method adopted for studying the topic selected is undoubtedly the best, namely, that which requires the student to study the plants and not the book. We think, however, that it will prove impracticable with this book, for this reason: in attempting to cover the whole ground of descriptive (phanerogamic) botany so many terms are introduced that in the time allotted in any ordinary school the pupil can get specimens of only a very few of them, especially of those applied to the flowers. By commencing in the spring and working through the whole summer he might get the majority of illustrations, but no school works so.

In fact the first part of the book is little else than an illustrated glossary. Here is a fair sample:

"The stamens and pistil of flowers have been called *essential* organs, because seeds can not be formed without their presence. As the calyx and corolla cover and nourish [*sic*] these, they have taken the name of *protecting organs*. When the protecting organs are both present in a flower, it is said to be *dichlamydeous*. When there is only a calyx, it is *monochlamydeous*." Page 45.

There is in the book hardly a hint as to homology or the cause of the affinities which are so emphasized on p. 75.

There is the too common quota of errors:

"A *compound raceme* When spreading it is called a *panicle*." p. 31.

"*RHAPHE*.—The connection between the base of the nucleus and the base of the ovule¹." p. 104.

¹ Previously defined as the point at which the funiculus is attached.—ED.

"Those fruits that consist of achenia on a dry receptacle, as the sunflower, or an enlarged pulpy receptacle, as the strawberry, are aggregate fruits." p. 113.

"The *archegone* or *pistillidia* of mosses also arise in clusters of leaves and are cell-like bodies, having a cap or *epigone* of the same nature as the perigone of antheridia. But the pistillidia bursts its cap, leaving part of it as a sheath below, and is carried upon a stalk . . . at the top of which is seen an urn-shaped body of curious structure, called a *spor-ange*." p. 180.

"*VAGINULE*.—The collar or sheath at the base of the seta, resulting from the bursting of the epigone." p. 181.

In the latter part of the book, a "popular flora," the author has undertaken the impossible task of selecting the "common" plants which are "found everywhere" for description and omitting others. It is an impossible task, because it is self evident that what is "common" in one locality may be extremely rare in another. In glancing through it we noted more than thirty species which every class brings in each spring which were omitted. What is true for this locality is probably true for others.

There is no index to the glossary. Altogether we must conclude that though the publisher's part of the book is excellent, the author's work still leaves the "long-felt want" unsupplied.

Chapters on Plant Life. By Sophie Bledsoe Herrick. Illustrated. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1885. Square 16°, pp. 206.

Popular, accurate and entertaining books on plant habits are few and far between, and it behooves us to welcome every attempt to enlist the interest of young people in the study of plants. Mrs. Herrick has made a successful attempt in this direction—not perfect, to be sure, yet still fairly successful. Her style is vivacious and the book will undoubtedly prove entertaining to those for whom it is written. It is specially commendable in that it does not ignore the existence of the lower cryptogams, some of the most interesting chapters being given to them; in all eight, out of sixteen. The necessity of using the simplest possible terms has been met in some cases by the adoption or invention of admirable ones; in others there is much to criticise. For example, it is misleading to call the oosphere of the mosses and allies an ovule (however etymologically correct it may be) and then use the same word for the ova of phanerogams. Since the word cell has been frequently used, egg-cell would have been equally simple and entirely accurate. Instances like this are numerous. The whole list of names and terms ought to be carefully revised if another edition is called for. Of course in such a book one does not expect scientific precision, but such liberty does not license inaccuracy, much less error. Errors there are, quite a number of them, big and little and of all degrees of heinousness. It is unfortunate that this should be so, because the book is addressed to those who are not likely to be able to detect them. Some of these errors are among the eighty-four illustrations, most if not all of which have been drawn by the author and photo-engraved. Although marred by these sins of commission, we hope the book will be widely read, not only by "Harper's Young People," but by all boys and girls who are interested in living things. It will certainly do much toward awakening such an interest.